

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 11, 21-25, 29, and 30 are currently pending. Claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 21, 23, 25, 29, and 30 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11-22, 24, 25, 29, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,310,692 to Fan et al. (hereinafter “the ‘692 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,647,056 to Barrett et al. (hereinafter “the ‘056 patent”) and U.S. Patent No. 6,401,116 to Okigami (hereinafter “the ‘116 patent”), further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,901,286 to Danknick et al. (hereinafter “the ‘286 patent”) and U.S. Patent No. 6,317,848 to Sorens et al. (hereinafter “the ‘848 patent”);¹ Claims 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘692, ‘056, ‘286, ‘848, and ‘116 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,430,711 to Sekizawa (hereinafter “the ‘711 patent”); and Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘692, ‘056, ‘116, ‘848, and ‘286 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,601,040 to Kolls (hereinafter “the ‘040 patent”).

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the interview granted Applicant’s representative on June 11, 2009, at which time a proposed amendment to the claims was discussed. At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner indicated that the proposed amendment would likely overcome the outstanding rejection of the claims.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a method of monitoring a plurality of image printing devices communicatively coupled to a network, comprising:

¹ However, Applicants note that Claims 12-20 are no longer pending.

periodically obtaining, by a first non-print-spooler monitoring computer at using a first Internet protocol over the network, first device information of an image printing device, the first device information including (1) status information obtained from the image printing device, and (2) identification of the image printing device;

storing, by the first monitoring computer, the obtained first device information into an information storage;

processing stored information of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the first monitoring computer to generate second device information that includes status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices; and

transmitting the second device information using a second Internet protocol from the first monitoring computer to a second computer that is connected to the network of the plurality of image printing devices,

wherein the first monitoring computer is remote from the plurality of image printing devices, and the first monitoring computer is the first computer to obtain the first device information from the plurality of image printing devices.

The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.²

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claim 1 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office Action asserts that the '692 patent discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of the first monitoring computer obtaining the first device information of the device through a firewall; processing the first device information and previously stored status information to generate second device information; that the monitoring device is coupled to an intranet and that the monitoring site is located over a wide area network or that the second computer is located at

² See, e.g., Figure 28 and the discussion related thereto in the specification. See in particular paragraph [0117] in the published application. Further, Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in this art would clearly recognize that a monitoring computer that receives status information of an image printing device over a network using an Internet protocol would not be a print server, since spooling over a wide-area network would allow confidential printing information outside the local area network of the printer.

the intranet network of the monitored device; and transmitting the second device information at periodic regular intervals from the first monitoring computer to a second monitoring computer, and relies on the '056, '116, '286, and '848 patents to remedy those deficiencies.

The '692 patent is directed to a printer resource management system that includes a database that stores, for a printer, at least one pair of attributes that are representative of a printer resource level and a printer resource threshold for preventive monitoring of the printer resource. Further, the '692 patent discloses that the printer resource manager receives the updated printer resource level from the printer (e.g., via SNMP), updates the level in the database, compares the resource level with the corresponding resource threshold to determine whether the corresponding printer resource level is deficient, and generates and outputs an advance notification if the printer resource level is determined to be deficient. In particular, as shown in Figure 3, the '692 patent discloses a printer 250, a server 240 having the printer resource manager 248, and a client 220. Further, as shown in the flowchart in Figure 4, the notification of the low printer resource level is dependent upon the comparison of the resource level with the threshold.

However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the '692 patent fails to disclose the processing and transmitting steps recited in Claim 1. In particular, Applicant respectfully submits that the '692 patent fails to disclose the processing of stored information of the plurality of image processing devices to generate second device information that includes status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, and the transmitting of the second device information to a second computer, as recited in amended Claim 1.

In this regard, Applicant notes that, regarding Claim 21, which previously recited a plurality of monitoring devices, the Office Action asserts on page 9 that the '692 patent discloses periodically processing first device information and previously stored status

information of a plurality of devices to generate a usage report that includes the first device information and the stored information. However, Applicant notes that the Office Action asserts that the “stored information” could be email addresses of the administrator or end users who are to receive the notification. However, Applicant notes that Claim 1 makes clear that the second device information includes status information.

Further, Applicant notes that the Office Action cites to column 4, lines 49-62 and column 5, lines 45-59 in the ‘692 patent for processing of device information from a plurality of devices. However, Applicant notes that, while the ‘692 patent implies that the server 240 can monitor the resource level at more than one printer and send a notice if the resource level falls below a particular threshold, Applicant respectfully submits that the ‘692 patent is silent regarding processing stored information of a plurality of image printing devices to generate second device information that includes status information of **each** of the plurality of image printing devices, and then transmitting that second device information to a second computer. Applicant respectfully submits that there is no teaching or suggestion in the ‘692 patent of generating device information that includes status information of each of a plurality of image printing devices that is sent to a second computer. Rather, the ‘692 patent merely discloses that printers can be individually monitored, and an alert can be sent if the resource level of any individual printer falls below a predetermined threshold.

The ‘056 patent is directed to a method for managing access to a peripheral over a local area network with an interactive network board connectable to the peripheral via bi-directional peripheral interface. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, the ‘056 patent discloses a network interface board (NEB) 2 connected to a printer 4, and the sending of information over a local area network to a network administrative PC 14. As noted in the outstanding Office Action, a log file can be maintained and accessed by the PC 14.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that the '056 patent fails to disclose the processing step recited in Claim 1, as asserted by page 5 of the outstanding Office Action. In this regard, Applicant notes that the passage cited in column 38 of the '056 patent states that the network expansion board NEB maintains a log file that includes daily, cumulative, and average values of the status information, and that the CPCONSOL program is merely able to obtain and display these values on a screen. The '056 patent does not disclose processing stored information to generate second device information by a first (remote) monitoring computer, but discloses that the NEB, which is attached to the printer, maintains the status information.

In particular, Applicant respectfully submits that the '056 patent fails to disclose processing stored information of a plurality of image printing devices to generate second device information that includes the status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. In particular, Applicant notes that, as discussed above, the log file is maintained by a network expansion of board, which is attached to an individual printer.

The '116 patent is directed to a remote trouble management system comprising a plurality of devices connected to the Internet, and a plurality of management servers for managing the plurality of devices individually through one of the Internet and an intranet connected to the Internet. As shown in Figure 1, the '116 patent discloses a firewall 7 connected to a local area network on which is connected a network connected device 5.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that the '116 patent fails to disclose the periodically obtaining step recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '116 patent fails to disclose the step of processing stored information of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the first monitoring computer to generate second device information that includes status information from each of the plurality of image printing

devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the '116 patent appears to be relied upon only for the teaching of a firewall.

The '286 patent is directed to a method for obtaining information from a peripheral that has an SNMP agent and an http server, the method comprising the steps of executing a browser to retrieve from the peripheral a file that includes a reference to a platform independent segment of executable code; processing the file to request the code segment from the peripheral; receiving and executing the code segment from the peripheral to create an SNMP client; executing the code segment to send a packet from the SNMP client to the SNMP agent and retrieving information concerning the peripheral from the SNMP agent. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, the '286 patent discloses a local area network 15, on which is a copier 11, connected through a multi-device controller 12, and a network interface board 14. The '286 patent also discloses that a workstations 9 and 16 are also connected to the local area network 15.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that the '286 patent fails to disclose the step of transmitting the second device information using a second Internet protocol from the first monitoring computer to a second computer that is connected to the network of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in Claim 1. In this regard, Applicant notes that the Office Action appears to rely on the '286 patent merely for the network architecture shown in Figure 1, in which a workstation is on the same local network as a copier, and the local area network is connected to a wide area network. However, Applicant notes that the '286 patent does not disclose any of the functionality recited in method Claim 1, nor does the Office Action appear to rely on any functionality disclosed by the '286 patent, except to note that the technical support local area network can "communicate" with the local area network 15. However, Applicant notes that Claim 1 requires the step of transmitting of device information using a second Internet protocol from the first monitoring computer to a second computer connected

to the network of the plurality of image printing devices. In particular, Applicant notes that Claim 1 is a method claim, and that the '286 patent does not disclose a transmitting step, even if the disclosed network architecture is similar.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '286 patent fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '692, '056, and '116 patents regarding the processing steps recited in amended Claim 1. The '286 patent is silent regarding processing stored information to generate second device information, the second device information including status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the first monitoring computer, as recited in amended Claim 1.

The '848 patent is directed to a method of tracking and communicating printer failures and usage profile aspects, including the steps of detecting when a first predetermined amount of time has passed; writing printer consumable usage data and printer condition data to nonvolatile memory; detecting an occurrence of a printer condition; writing the printer consumable usage data and the printer condition data pertaining to the printer condition detected to nonvolatile memory; and sending an email message showing the printer consumable usage data and the printer condition data written over the predetermined amounts of time, thereby communicating patterns of printer usage over time. In particular, as shown in Figure 3, the '848 patent discloses a method that is implemented in a printer that records various information regarding operation of the printer at various times. Further, as stated by the outstanding Office Action, the background of the invention section of the '848 patent states that "...there is a need for notification on regular intervals, not just on error condition. There is also a need for this communication of regular intervals to contain information of not

only consumable usage but other usage information, and for patterns of usage to be communicated in a usable format to the manufacturer.”³

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the ‘848 patent fails to disclose a step of processing stored information of a plurality of image printing devices monitored by a first monitored computer to generate second device information that includes status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the ‘848 patent is limited to a method implemented on a printer, and is only concerned with events occurring on that individual printer.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the ‘692, ‘056, ‘116, ‘286, and ‘848 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the processing step recited in Claim 1. In particular, the combined teachings of the cited references fail to teach or suggest generating the second device information that includes status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. Further, it follows that the combined teachings of the cited references also fail to teach or suggest transmitting that second device information to a second computer, as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 patentably defines over any proper combination of the ‘692, ‘056, ‘116, ‘286, and ‘848 patents.

Independent Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

³ ‘848 patent, column 1, lines 28-33.

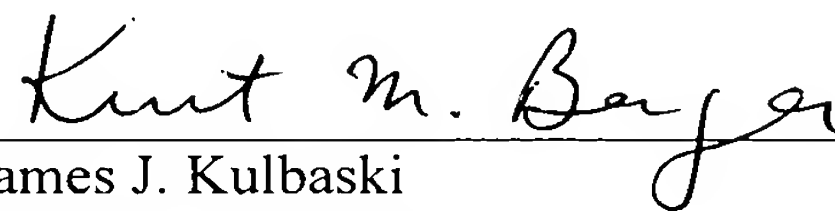
Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 2, 5, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicant respectfully submits that the '040 and '711 patents fail to remedy the deficiencies of the '692, '056, '286, '848, and '116 patents, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of dependent Claims 2, 5, and 23 are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1 and 21.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the cited references.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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